

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1-9 and add new Claims 10-15:

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9. 10. A process for preparing a tungsten carbide comprising gas phase carburization of tungsten powders and/or suitable tungsten precursor compound powders at a temperature ranging from 850°C to 950°C, wherein the carburizing gas phase used is a CO<sub>2</sub>/CO mixture with a CO<sub>2</sub> content which is above the Boudouard equilibrium content corresponding to the carburization temperature, and wherein the carburization is carried out with a carbon activity ranging from 0.4 to less than 1, thereby forming the tungsten carbide.

11. The process according to Claim 10, wherein carburization is carried out with a carbon activity ranging from 0.4 to 0.9.

12. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the carburization temperature ranges from 900°C to 950°C.

13. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the carburization is carried out at the carburization temperature over a period ranging from 4 to 10 hours.

14. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the precursor compound is tungsten oxide powder.

15. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the process further comprises subjecting the tungsten carbide made by the process according Claim 10 to a heat treatment at a temperature ranging from 1,150°C to 1,800°C after carburization.

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